

DECEMBER, 1945

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THEATRE WORLD

Supplement of: "Oedipus" and "The Critic"



by John Vickers

LAURENCE OLIVIER as Oedipus

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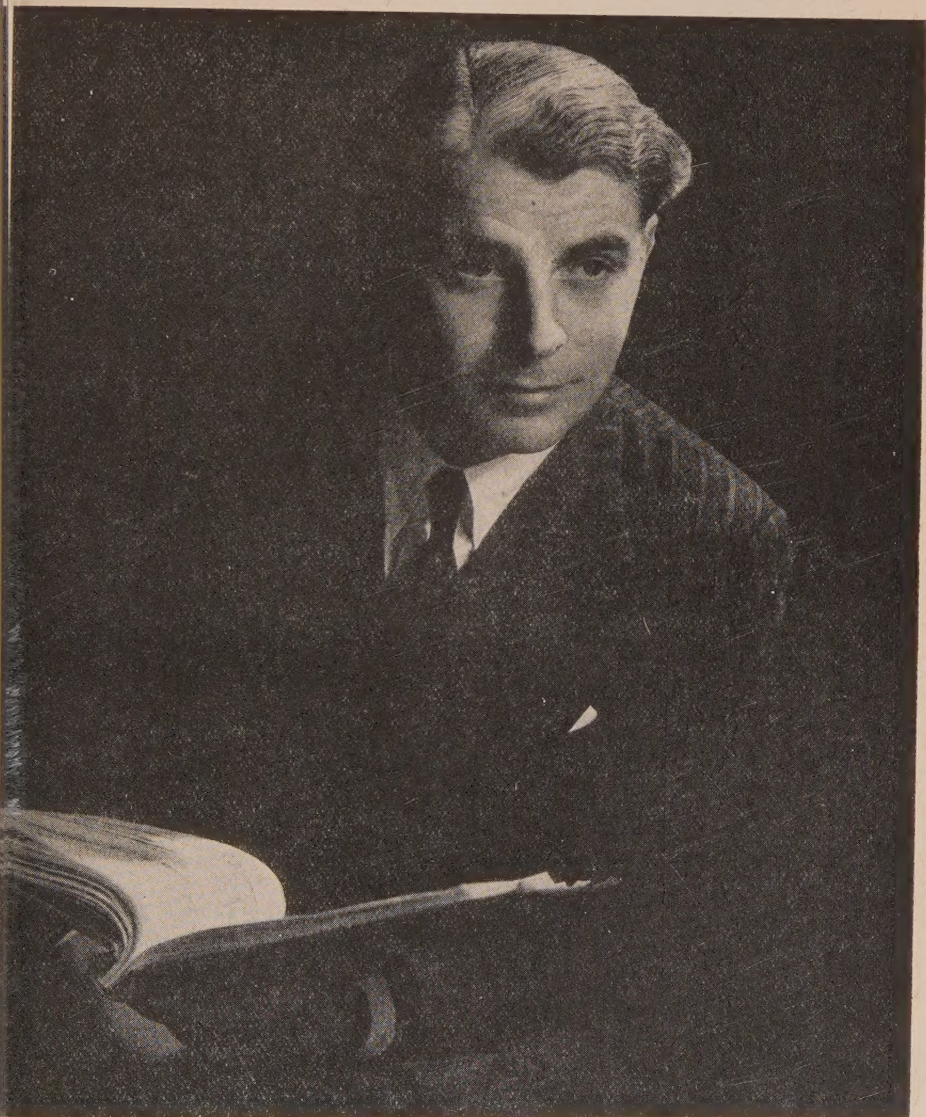
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Theatre World

(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL)

Vol. XLI
No. 252

Editorial and Advertising Offices:

1, DORSET BUILDINGS,
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4 (Central 1555)

Subscription
13/6 per year
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Edited by Frances Stephens

December, 1945

Over the Footlights

THE Arts Council is already busy with its post-war plans. Quite unobtrusively during this past month was launched at Salisbury a new theatre (the old Garrison theatre, now called the Arts), with a resident company, the first of a chain in various towns which will serve their immediate neighbourhood, visiting nearby towns which have no permanent theatres of their own. In this way the company will play for one week of each month at their own theatre, then tour adjacent towns for the other three, during which time concerts and lectures will fill in the gap.

Another significant activity of the Council is to arrange an interchange of repertory companies, a number of which have been invited to give a week's season at the Royal, Bristol. This cannot but broaden and stimulate the work of these companies and assist them to avoid the deadly effects, artistically, of getting in a rut.

How different the story after the last year, when the theatre in the provinces was allowed to wilt and perish, first through indifference and then in face of the overpowering competition from the cinemas. Few realised then that a country whose provincial theatres are dead (however flourishing the stage might be in the capital) is dramatically speaking like a tree without roots.

Strange to say all this activity is leading us back to something like the great old days of the "fit-ups," for now we are taking the theatre to the people, a humanising and delightful experience for all concerned.

* * *

Cicely Courtneidge is back in Town, and from all accounts *Under the Counter* is her biggest success yet. London always seems

a brighter place when Miss Courtneidge, mistress of mirth, is making nonsense of life somewhere in the precincts of Cambridge Circus. This time she is at the Phoenix, just a stone's throw from the old haunt, the Palace. Also produced too late for review this month was *The Sacred Flame*, with Sonia Dresdel, which is being presented for matinees only at the St. Martins. This is one way of overcoming the theatre shortage, and well worth repeating in suitable cases while the boom lasts. The idea began under stress of war for children's Christmas plays, and seemed to work very well.

After many rumours and counter rumours it now seems that the Christmas plans are crystallised. Emile Littler's *Aladdin* will be produced at the Cambridge, with Binnie Hale as principal boy, and Jack Hylton will present *Cinderella* (with Bud Flanagan, Jean Adrienne and Lois Green), at the Adelphi. *The Glass Slipper*, which Robert Donat presented last year, will again be at the St. James's and Celia Lipton will be this year's Peter Pan at the Scala.

In these days of records, hats off to the Ambassadors, where *Sweeter and Lower*, now past its 1,000th performance, has beaten the run of any revue to date. On December 22nd, *Arsenic and Old Lace* reaches its third birthday and 1,275th performance. Dame Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Edmund Willard, and Martin Miller are still playing the parts they created.

It is appropriate to finish this memorable year with a supplement of *Oedipus* and *The Critic*. Pictures of *Henry IV, Parts I and II* were not ready for this issue, but will appear next month. F.S.

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New Shows of the Month

"The Forrigan Reel"—Sadler's Wells, October 4th.

"Follow the Girls"—His Majesty's, October 25th.

"The Trojan Women"—Lyric, Hammersmith, November 8th.

"The Forrigan Reel"

MOST of the evening was spent in wondering just what Mr. Bridie was getting at, or whether this was just one big leg-pull. Even the apologetic epilogue did not dispel a growing feeling that the author was getting at nothing at all, unless it was that toddy could be very potent in the misty highlands of 1740. Not that the toddy imbibed in large quantities by Old MacAlpin and his crazy son Donald noticeably sharpened the author's accustomed wit. Alastair Sim and Duncan Macrae made the most of these odd characters who discover in themselves the gift of healing by the Forrigan Reel—Donald's own line in dancing—and what seemed like a bit of psycho-analysis, aided and abetted by the aforementioned toddy. In this way the local laird's wife (who imagined herself a clock) and a visiting Yorkshire timber merchant's daughter (who has an overdose of ego) are cured of their vague ailments and all ends happily in a grand demonstration of Donald's reel.

This is a play with music by Cedric Thorpe Davie and the action is interrupted from time to time for the singing of some ballads, which are very charming in themselves, especially as Walford Hyden was conducting the orchestra. The singing (and acting) from Eric Fort, Geoffrey Dunn, Ian Wallace, Molly Urquhart and Joan Sterndale Bennett was most attractive, but all the same was music necessary to this Gaelic fantasy? F.S.

"Follow the Girls"

IT is quite a pleasure to be able to praise almost unreservedly a new musical comedy; but this is a case where comedy, spectacle, music and story hang together in a most satisfactory way. And in Arthur Askey and pep-girl Evelyn Dall musical comedy has a grand team who leave no stone unturned to put this somewhat discredited form of entertainment right back on the map.

Follow the Girls, which is presented by Jack Hylton and produced by Walter Forde, of film fame, is set in a New York Services Club, where well-known stage and film stars entertain; and tells of the efforts of one, Goofy Gale (Arthur Askey), to get inside to meet strip-tease dancer Bubbles

La Marr (Evelyn Dall). Goofy encounters many vicissitudes and is forced to adopt some very amusing disguises. Talented Wendy Toye, dancer and choreographer, also appears as a character in the story, and her dancing is one of the high-spots. Most attractive number is "Where You Are," sung by Hugh French as Bob, and other members of the cast who shine are Jack Billings (the choreographer of the show), David Dale, Arthur Loader, Diana Chase and Sheila Douglas-Pennant. The chorus is attractive, and the decor and costumes in keeping with the general high level of production. L.J.

"The Trojan Women"

IT must be a sign of the times that London now has two Greek tragedies to offer, and also that it has been thought prudent to couple with each a piece of lighter entertainment. *Oedipus* at the New has *The Critic* and *The Trojan Women* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, a charming Thornton Wilder fragment *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* to lighten the gloom of unrelieved tragedy.

The Euripides play strikes a painfully topical note, for have not the women of Europe and Asia just suffered every jot as much as those unfortunates of Troy? The translation by F. Kinchin Smith, with its stark, uncompromising language, emphasises the age-old horrors of war, and though many no doubt thought the costumes incongruous (the Greeks appear in "Ruritanian" uniforms, and the women in indeterminate costumes, half classic, half modern) these to my mind made one see the tragedy of women in war as ranging over the centuries with dreadful frequency.

Marie Ney is a restrained and noble Hecuba, who does not overshadow the other tragic women, among whom Eileen Herlie as Andromache and Joy Harvey as Cassandra are outstanding. Kathleen Kent's Helen is a gaudy wanton, an attractive creature no doubt, but surely it would need a face of deeper guile to launch a thousand ships. Robert Marsden's sonorous voice as the god in prologue and epilogue made a deep impression.

The Thornton Wilder piece with its pretentious title is just the simple story of a family's car trip to see a daughter just returned from death's door. There is no scenery for this; just an odd chair or two to represent the car, and Joan Young, Alexander Archdale, Michael Newall and Gabrielle Blunt demonstrate that Ma, Pop and the two youngsters out for the day are the same amusing people the world over. F.S.



“Follow the Girls”

JACK HYLTON'S
NEW MUSICAL AT
HIS MAJESTY'S

● This new musical comedy has met with a big success since it opened in London a few weeks ago. The book is by Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis with additional scenes by Fred Thompson and Con West, while the lyrics and music are by Don Shapiro, Milton Pascal and Phil Charig, with additional lyrics by Frank Eyton. Jack Hylton has borrowed from the film industry for his producer—Walter Forde.

The story of this musical, which is one of the best London has seen for a long time, is based on some happenings in a New York Services Club in which famous screen and stage stars entertain. *On the left*: Arthur Askey, David Dale and Evelyn Dall (as a strip-tease dancer) in an amusing moment. Others in the cast are Hugh French, Vic Marlow, Jack Billings, Sheila Douglas-Pennant, Diana Chase and Ballerina Wendy Toye.



EVELYN DALL
as
Bubbles La Marr



ARTHUR ASKEY
as
Goofy Gale (disguised)

Pictures
by
Bunyard-Ader



Harlip

CICELY COURTNEIDGE

who has made one of the biggest hits of her career in the new comedy-with-music, *Under the Counter*, which opened at the Phoenix Theatre on November 22nd.



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ONLY those men who have been prisoners-of-war in Germany can say whether or not *Zoo in Silesia* gave a faithful representation of a day in a hut in a prisoner-of-war Camp but, since the author, the producer, the designer of the set and one or two members of the cast had all been p.o.w. in Germany, authenticity of types and details were assured. Richard Pollock, the author, has conceived the hut as a perfect microcosm, introducing many and various human specimens, mounted entertaining and suggestive action making a shapely and vivid play, which was presented with artistry and acted with zest. The play does for prison camps what "Journey's End" did for trench warfare. The hero (so unlike Stanhope) is a huckstering materialist who has achieved absolute ascendancy over everybody in the hut by trading in all available commodities and services, cigarettes being the currency in which prices are expressed. Mr. Hu Williams made this capitalist fascination rather admirable.

An adaptation by Norman Ginsbury of Dostoevsky's story *The Gambler*, followed on November 7th. A new play, *Skipper Next to God*, is now being performed.

Granville

AFIFTH programme of Grand Guignol plays testifies to Mr. A. A. Shenbrot's fidelity to this genre and to Mr. Frederick Whitney's facility in contriving tense and gritty dramas of assault. It may be found that a sequence of five sex dramas added up to a morbid evening. With a series of shocks the effect is not cumulative because the law of diminishing returns operates as a mental reaction is enfeebled by so many rough attacks.

Most of the plays merely provide unusual opportunities for strong acting, opportunities fully taken by an equally strong company, but one play, "The Celibate" poses a serious problem and then, when time is up, disposes of it in a puff of melodramatic smoke. John Allen gave a moving performance as a perverted curate in the play and James Raglan enforced sympathy diluted with amusement as his embarrassed vicar. Jean Forbes-Robertson brought a poignant feeling of reality to several startling and shattering situations but even her art was scarcely sufficient to render the author's conclusion acceptable. H.G.M.

A new three-act play, written on Grand Guignol lines, *Dear Murderer*, by St. John L. Clowes, was presented at the Granville on November 28th, too late for review. (See also review of *People Like Us* (Gateway), on page 35).

(Left) HERMIONE BADDELEY

who is starring with Leslie Banks in *Grand National Night* by Dorothy Campbell Christie which started a prior to London tour at the New Theatre, Oxford, on November 19th.

Ballet Rambert

by

AUDREY WILLIAMSON

A NEW ballet by Frank Staff, *Un Songe*, a revival of Walter Gore's *Confessionals* and a new production of *Giselle*, Act II, were the principal features of the short season by the Ballet Rambert at Hammer-smith early in November.

Un Songe is in the *Cotillon* tradition of modern ballet: a pure dance study designed to create a mood or atmosphere rather than a concrete theme, and with lighting and *décor* used to help the suggestive yet indefinable feeling of the dance. The success of such a method in the theatre is dependent on exceptional beauty and imaginative invention in the choreography and enough feeling for dramatic contrast, however inexplicable and dream-like the incident and character, to prevent the scene becoming monotonous. Frank Staff, lacking the maturity and brilliance of invention of Balanchine or Ashton, has not succeeded in avoiding these pitfalls and his ballet peters out with a feeling of what one would call anti-climax if there had ever been any climax to anti! The suspense and variety of *Cotillon* or the *Apparitions* Ball Scene, in which Ashton combined dance patterns and movements of poetic loveliness with a similar fateful atmosphere, to which he added a quality of vividly compressed excitement and drama, are lacking in the Staff work, although it begins superbly with a dream-scene without music in which the use of dance, fans and gliding figures creates a fascinating and original sense of rustling fear. Although I do not share Serge Lifar's theory that choreography may be completely independent of music it is entirely legitimate in this case in reinforcing the uncanny suggestion of a dream: no music could be more pregnant than this silence. It also establishes a contrast when the dream evaporates and the real ball scene, with music by Lekeu, commences, although it is a criticism of the ballet that the choreography itself fails to show such contrast and the characters, such as they are, remain nebulous and unidentifiable in spite of the very competent performances of Elizabeth Schooling, Walter Gore and Frank Staff himself.

The ballet is beautifully produced with imaginative lighting and *décor* by Ronald Wilson, and although in the later phases the dance, like the *Apparitions*-style costumes, seems occasionally derivative there



SALLY GILMOUR

as *Giselle*

(Photo by Joan S. Harvey, Torquay)

is enough originality and beauty in this composition to confirm Frank Staff's position as a young choreographer of great talent and possibilities.

There is no doubt Walter Gore's *Confessionals*, a monologue in ballet form which is mimed and danced by a principal dancer to Sibelius music and the recitation of a poem by Browning, has a more concentrated dramatic effect when performed in the tiny theatres for which it was originally devised. Its moving power tends to be distilled on a larger stage, although the originality of its blend of the spoken word, music and dance remains unchallenged and Sally Gilmour continues to give a performance of tragic expressiveness as the young girl imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition and pouring out her bitterness in caged and anguished memories of her dead lover. No other dancer of our time could have given a performance more poignant in its sense of pain, hatred and wasting despair. The dream episode with the remembered lover (Walter Gore) is delicately introduced and the immobile black figures (one of whom recites the poem which was formerly spoken off-stage) added in this revival do not detract from the ballet's effect, although I much preferred previous simpler recitations to the luridly emotional declamation now used.

I do not personally like truncated versions of *Giselle* and even when Frederick Ashton played Hilarion considered that the scene

(Continued overleaf)

of the Huntsman's drowning, incomprehensible if not actually ludicrous when the first Act has been omitted, would be better "cut" in the circumstances. The present Hilarion suffers, like many of the Ballet Rambert male dancers, from an unconvincing make-up and is so obviously determined on suicide that the Wilis quite understandably assume they need make only a perfunctory effort to speed the happy release. This is, of course, a fault in production and any feeling of the dramatic part played by the corps-de-ballet in the action, and of the emotional significance of the dance, is lost in this staging as it is in so many contemporary performances of *Giselle*. Hugh Stevenson's *décor*, however, is infinitely the most beautiful and appropriate in use in England to-day and the period-atmosphere is authentic.

Unfortunately on the first night Sally Gilmour was prevented by illness from appearing and Joan McClelland made an intelligent and graceful attempt, at very short notice, at an intensely difficult part which is outside her normal range. A fellow-critic has very aptly compared this dancer's style to that of Verchinina, and Verchininas are not the stuff of which Giselles are made, although Miss McClelland's artistry carried her through the performance with credit. Walter Gore, always *demi-caractère* in style and lacking the dignity

and purity of "line" of the classical *danseur noble*, was not ideally cast as Albrecht and both his acting and make-up struck me as exaggerated; but he partnered well and danced his solos with spring and crisp *batterie*. Sally Gilmour on her return brought its true spiritual quality to the ballet and danced the later passages with a technical control that is still a little lacking in her early *adagio*. Probably in the circumstances this is only a sketch of what this sensitive and technically improving dancer will make of the part in the future. Judging by completeness, rather than size, of achievement the most successful performance was Joyce Graeme's Queen of the Wilis, which was beautifully danced and perfectly captured the ethereality and ice-brittle pride of the character.

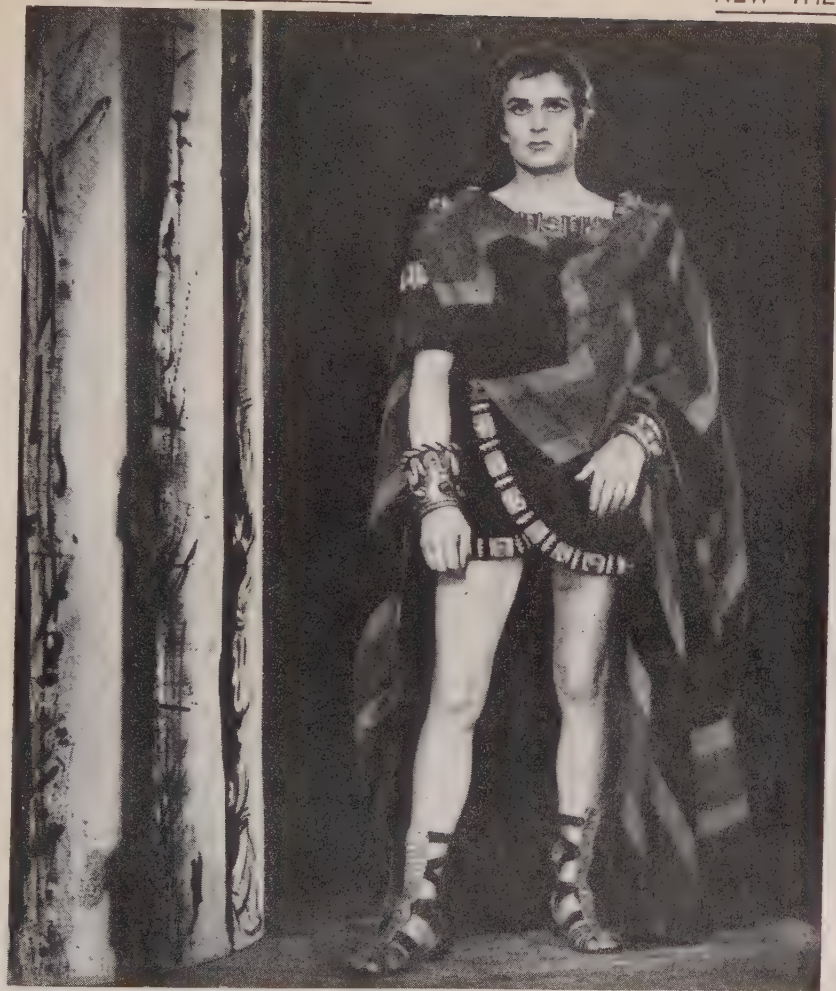
The absence of *Capriol Suite*, *Mephisto Valse*, *Death and the Maiden* and *Jardin Aux Lilas* (Andrée Howard's *The Fugitive*, which shows signs of not wearing well, is choreographically an inferior substitute) tended to weaken the variety of the programmes, but *Soirée Musicale* came up with renewed vivacity and charm and *Peter and the Wolf* received a delightful performance in which Frank Staff, as the Huntsman, performed miracles of burlesque and Annette Chappell, a young newcomer as the Bird, showed exceptional personality and classical promise.

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LAURENCE OLIVIER as Oedipus

“Oedipus”

by SOPHOCLES

FOLLOWING on the brilliant productions of *Henry IV, Parts I and II*, with which the Old Vic Theatre Company's second season opened at the New Theatre, came the outstanding success of *Oedipus* and *The Critic*, presented as a unique double bill.

After Ralph Richardson's monumental Falstaff comes Laurence Olivier's double success as Oedipus and Mr. Puff, two performances that mark him down as one of the greatest actors of our day.

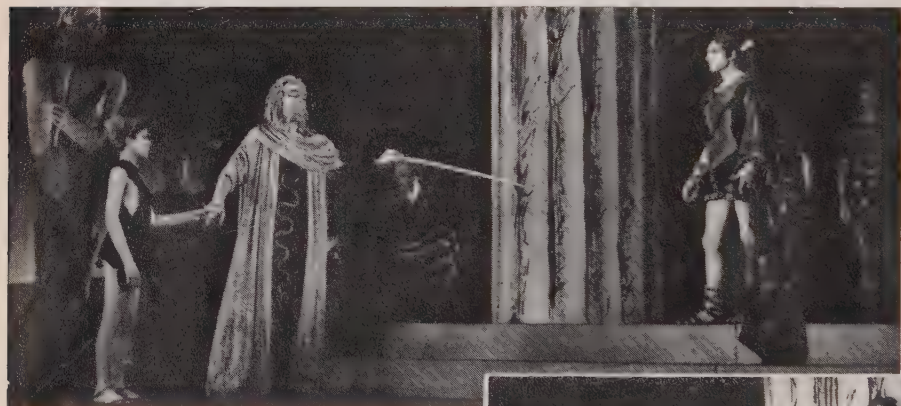
In the Greek tragedy, here rendered in the W. B. Yeats' version, Laurence Olivier

plays the ill-fated king with a tragic intensity rarely seen in our theatre, and is admirably supported by Sybil Thorndike as Jocasta, Ralph Richardson as Tiresias and Nicholas Hannen as the Chorus Leader. The play reveals everywhere the master hand of Michel Saint-Denis, the producer, and the fine music by Antony Hopkins nobly enhances the atmosphere. The striking scenery by John Piper, with its stark pillars and primitive gods, and the impressive costumes by Marie-Hélène Dasté are other important contributions to a production on the highest level.

PICTURES BY JOHN VICKERS



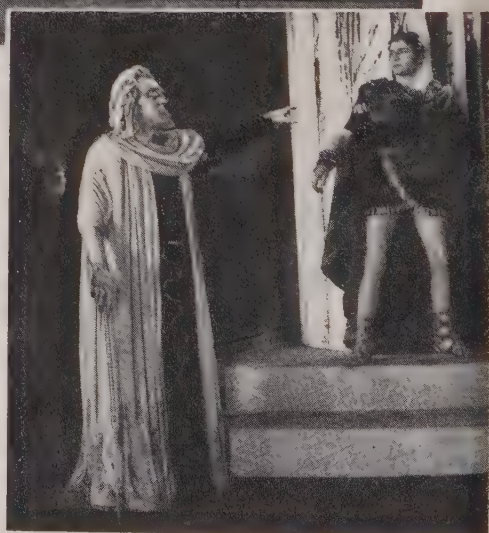
Oedipus: Children, descendants of old Cadmus, why do you come before me? Why do you carry the branches of suppliants, while the city smokes with incense and murmurs with prayer and lamentation? The opening scene. The people of Thebes beseech their king to save them from the blight and plagues with which the gods have visited them.



Tiresias: I say that you are yourself the murderer that you seek.

The oracle has said that Thebes will be delivered from its tribulation if the murderer of the old king Laius is brought to justice. Oedipus consults the seer Tiresias and hears some terrible things.

(Ralph Richardson as Tiresias and Ray Jackson as Boy).



Tiresias: I say that you are living with your next of kin in unimagined shame. The old man continues his revelations but Oedipus is enraged and will not believe him.

Creon : What will you
do then? Drive me
from the land?

Oedipus : Not so. I
do not desire your
banishment, but your
death.

Oedipus accuses
his brother-in-law,
Creon, of plotting
to seize his crown
and threatens him
with death.

(George Curzon as
Creon)



Oedipus : What rest-
lessness of soul, lady,
has come upon me
since I heard you
speak, what a tumult
of the mind.

Jocasta : What is this
new anxiety? What
has startled you?

Jocasta, wife of
Oedipus, relates
how and when her
first husband,
Laius, was mur-
dered by robbers.
A strange forebod-
ing comes over
Oedipus as he
hears the story.

(Sybil Thorndike
as Jocasta)



Chorus :

A man becomes a
tyrant out of inso-
lence,

He climbs until all
people call him
great,

He seems upon the
summit, and God
flings him thence.

(Nicholas Hannen
as Chorus Leader)





Oedipus: What do you say? Was Polybius not my father?

Messenger: He did not beget you any more than I.

Oedipus learns that he was a foundling child and Jocasta hears with horror the tale that the first messenger unfolds.

(Miles Mallester as First Messenger)



Herdman: Alas! I am on the edge of dreadful words.

In his relentless search into the origin of his birth, Oedipus hears the awful truth from the old herdsman. The prophecy has been fulfilled for he is indeed the son of Laius and murdered his father, and Jocasta is his mother.

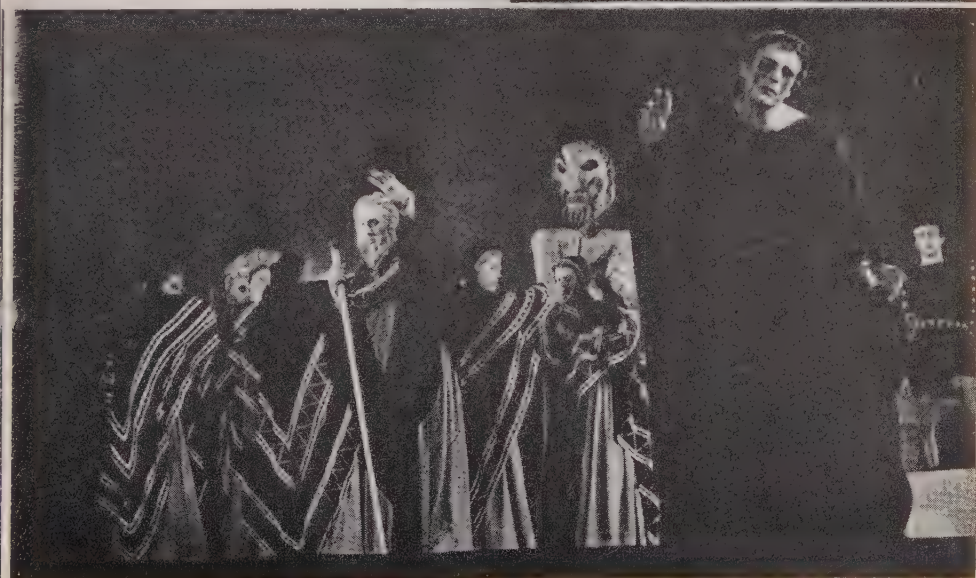
(George Relph as the herdsman)

Oedipus: Woe, woe is me! Miserable, miserable that I am! Where am I? Where am I going? Where am I cast away?

Tragedy overflows when Jocasta hangs herself and Oedipus, snatching the golden brooches from her dress, strikes out his eyes and staggers blinded from his palace.

Oedipus: O marriage bed that gave me birth and after that gave children to your child, creating an incestuous kindred of fathers, brothers, sons, wives and mothers.

Abject remorse overtakes the proud and haughty king as the lamenting Chorus turn away from him in horror and pity.





Oedipus : No ! Do not take them from me !

Creon : Do not seek to be master any more. When you had your will it brought you no good thing.

Oedipus bids farewell to his daughters, and Creon, now king, leads him into the palace.
(Jane Wenham and Elizabeth Osman as the daughters of Oedipus, and *extreme right*,
Michael Warre as Second Messenger).



Chorus : Call no man fortunate that is not dead ;
The dead are free from pain.

The closing moment of the tragedy.



Puff: Vastly well, sir! Vastly well! A most interesting gravity!

RALPH RICHARDSON as the Earl of Burleigh, and LAURENCE OLIVIER as Puff, in a most amusing moment from Act II.

“*The Critic*”

or, A TRAGEDY REHEARSED

by R. B. SHERIDAN

NOTHING could afford greater contrast to the unrelieved tragedy of *Oedipus* than this light-hearted frolic in which Sheridan, with many a witty shaft, makes fine sport of the theatre, playwrights, players and critics alike. Mr. Puff, whose name most aptly persists in journalism to this day, is a most amusing but withal lovable character in the hands of Mr. Olivier, who struts through the piece with uptilted nose and periwig and a fine show of righteous indignation when his play is mangled at Drury Lane. The rest of the company also appear to enjoy every moment of comedy, and the production of Miles Malleon and the scenery and costumes by Tanya Moiseiwitsch play their part handsomely.

PICTURES

BY

JOHN VICKERS



Sneér: In short, even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you, for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating, so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor.

Mr. Sneer does not spare his candour, much to the chagrin of Sir Fretful Plagiary, pompous and tedious old playwright, when they meet in Mr. Dangle's house. The year is 1779. (L. to R.: George Relph as Dangle, George Curzon as Sneer and Miles Malleeson as Sir Fretful Plagiary).



Puff: What the plague! A play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange that though they never did, they *might* happen.

Another caller, the loquacious Mr. Puff, self-termed "practitioner in panegyric, and professor in the art of puffing," provides further amusement for Sneer, the critic, and Dangle, the amateur dabbler in things theatrical. Mr. Puff invites his friends to view a rehearsal of his new tragedy, "The Spanish Armada," at Drury Lane Theatre.

Puff: You could not go off kneeling, could you?
Sir Walter: Oh, no, sir! Impossible!

The rehearsal is on and Mr. Puff mingles freely with the players on the stage, while his friends view the proceedings with mixed feelings.

(L. to R.: Paul Stevenson as Master of the Horse, Michael Warre as Sir Walter Raleigh, Michael Ragnan as Earl of Leicester, George Rose as Sir Christopher Hatton and Nicholas Hannen as the Governor of Tilbury).



Tilburina:

Alas, my gentle Nora,
 Thy tender youth as yet
 hath never mourned
 Love's fatal dart.

Tilburina, daughter of the Governor, her Confidant, and Whiskerandos, *Tilburina's* ill-starred lover, indulge in a gross piece of over-acting, to the evident appreciation of Mr. Puff.

(L. to R.: Joyce Redman as Confidant, Nicolette Bernard as Tilburina, and Sydney Tafler as Whiskerandos).

Governor: Hold, daughter, peace! This love hath turned thy brain. The Spanish Fleet thou must not see—because it is not yet in sight!

Another touching moment between father and daughter, while the Confidant does her best to imitate her mistress's emotions.





Puff: The pruning knife! Zounds, the axe! Why, here has been such lopping and topping I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently.

Poor Mr. Puff protests that his play is being hacked to pieces when passage after passage is omitted with disconcerting frequency.

(*L.*: John Garley as Prompter).



First Justice: No orphan now, without a friend art thou:
I am thy father, *here's* thy mother, *there* thy uncle.

An amusing moment from the under-plot of Mr. Puff's tragedy.

(*L. to R.*: Peter Copley as First Justice, Sybil Thorndike as Justice's Lady and (*left*) Robin Lloyd as Justice's Son)



There's situation for you! There's a heroic group! You see, the ladies can't stab Whiskerandos—durst not strike them for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him for fear of their nieces.

The grand duel scene, as a result of which Whiskerandos meets his fate.



Tilburina: The wind whistles, the moon rises, see, they have killed my squirrel in his cage.

Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her Confidant stark mad in white n." Tilburina plays the Ophelia in fine style with her Confidant at her heels, a se which Mr. Sneer and Mr. Dangle find hard to swallow. But there is more to come, for Mr. Puff has a realistic sea-fight up his sleeve.



Above: Mr. Puff's spectacular scena. "I Spanish Armada," about to commence. *Left:* To the consternation of all, Mr. Puff caught up on a piece of scenery and disappeared from view, only to reappear, dazed a few minutes later on a convenient cloud. *Below:* The final moment of the play. Mr. Puff, overwhelmed by the many disasters attending the rehearsal, collapses in the arms of his two friends Dangle and Sneer, while the company looks on aghast.



Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

ONCE a playwright becomes an acclaimed success, managers suddenly discover enough merit in his earlier works to want to produce them. Tennessee Williams, whose plays have been knocked from one producer's book to another for the last ten years, won the coveted Drama Critic's Award for his current hit, *The Glass Menagerie*, and now having the satisfaction of seeing his earlier attempts reach Broadway. Guthrie McClintic, in association with Lee Shubert, has just brought in *You Touched Me!*, a romantic comedy by Mr. Williams and Gerald Windham suggested by a short story of the same name by D. H. Lawrence. Pulitzer Prize winner, Mary Chase, for that earlier sensational smash, *Harvey*, has tempted Max Gordon to put on, George S. Kaufman, Elia Kazan and Fay Bainter to come from the West to star in *Next Half Hour*, something which started sending around some four years ago. This is now in rehearsal and destined for New York shortly.

The plot of *You Touched Me!* is very simple. A Canadian flyer (Montgomery Clift), an orphan, returns to spend his childhood with his adopted family in rural England. The house is dominated by an aunt (Catherine Willard), a provincial-minded, shrewish spinster who refuses to let anything fresh and vigorous crash into her complacent, narrow, medieval existence. Under her domination is her brother Cornelius (Edmund Gwenn), a sex-seafaring captain who, smothered by

his surroundings, turns for refuge to the booze bottle and his daughter Matilda (Marianne Stewart), who is rapidly becoming a duplication of her austere Aunt Emmie—that is, until our young flier brings to her the touch of life and carries her off in Act three to the brave new world.

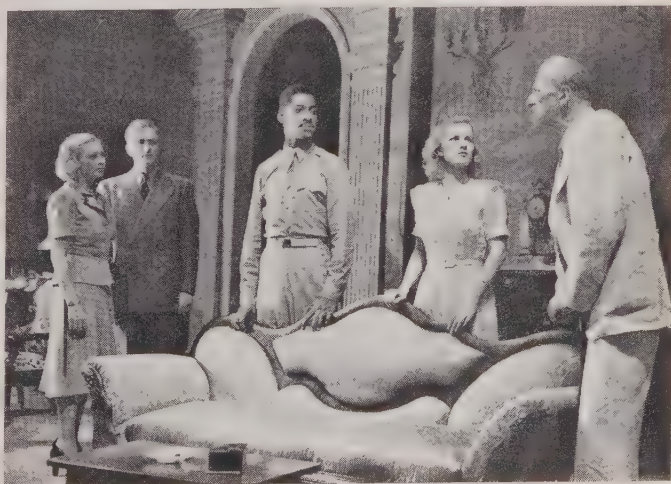
This thread of a plot has been given much fancy weaving. There is considerable high flown talk about the futility of war and the hope of something better arising from the ashes of destruction; a rarefied love story conducted on a poetic plane; some salty reminiscences from the wry, bewhiskered sea dog; and several situations running from high comedy to farce stemming from Aunt Emmie's attempt to seduce the new local reverend into spiritual matrimony. These elements have not been blended too perfectly and the resulting pattern, while striking at times, is better in detail than as a whole.

The impeccable McClintic touch is gratifyingly evident both in the production and staging. The three level setting by Motley of the cloistered and cluttered English house is beautifully atmospheric and the cast has been superbly chosen. The amiable and always delightful Edmund Gwenn has a high old time as the bibulous sea captain and Montgomery Clift and Catherine Willard are fine in the other featured roles.

Already there has been an announcement that *You Touched Me!* will make the

(Continued on page 25)

to R.: Carol Goodner, Ed Gough, Gordon Heath, Barbara Bel Geddes and Charles Waldron, in a dramatic moment from *Deep Are the Roots*, by Arnaud Essseau and James Gow, stars of *To-morrow The World*. This play deals with the negro problem, which is still in the public mind in the States at the moment, and has made a deep impression on New York theatregoers.





Harli

GOOGIE WITHERS, who is now appearing with Hugh Sinclair, at the Apollo, in Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, in which they take the roles of Amanda and Elyot in succession to Kay Hammond and John Clements.



Paul Tanqueron

SONIA DREDEL is now playing in a matinee revival of Maugham's *The Sacred Flame*, at the St. Martin's, which of course in no way interferes with the run of *The Shop at Sly Corner* at the same theatre.



Alexander Bender

EDNA WOOD, one of the big attractions of *Sweetest and Lower*, J. W. Pemberton's revue which passed its 1,000th performance at the Ambassadors Theatre on November 20th.



Karl Schenk

RUTH NAYLOR, charming leading lady in *Gay Rosalinda*, the delightful operetta at the Palace, which continues to be one of London's biggest musical successes.

Echoes from Broadway

(Continued from page 23)

Edmund Gwenn, Norah Howard and Montgomery Clift in a scene from *You Touched Me!*, a romantic comedy with an English setting, by Tennessee Williams and Donald Windham, based on the short story by D. H. Lawrence.



West End. It is unquestionably an interesting work and of a type that appeals to British playgoers. However, in spite of the fact that the playwrights have brought their story up to 1943, the 1918 altitude of D. H. Lawrence's short story prevails. The virtuous heroine is unbelievably dated and we wonder whether you, over there, who have shared the hardships of war so closely, will be able wholeheartedly to accept Aunt Mimmie and her Remoteness to World War I.

The disgraceful attitude of many white people in America, particularly in the South, towards the Negro, which in cruelty and intolerance is as vicious as nazism, is brought out for airing in *Deep Are The Roots* by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow, authors of *Tomorrow The World*.

Lieutenant Brett Charles (Gordon Heath), a Negro war hero returns to the southern mansion in which he grew up, his mother being an old family servant there. Here he meets again all the prejudices that are rampant in the South towards his race, which are doubly hard to take now that he has been treated with kindness and respect by families in Italy and England. Once again he cannot be seen even walking with a white girl; he cannot get a book from the town's public library without a letter from a white person and then he must only enter through the back door. These and similar humiliations you in England will find difficult to believe but the fact is they do evilly exist. The two daughters in this mansion of an old retired United States Senator (Charles Waldron) have always shown a special interest in Brett. The elder (Carol Goodner) professes to liberal ideas and makes much fuss of her efforts to help Brett in his fight

against this inequality until her younger sister (Barbara Bel Geddes) confesses her love and determination to marry the Negro. This disgusts and shocks the elder sister so thoroughly that she reverts to the old hatreds that have been so deeply rooted in her. She joins her father, who represents all that is decadent in the South, in framing Brett of a petty theft to get him arrested and out of the way.

This melodramatic story line provides the springboard for the authors to discuss this negro problem at great length. Now and then their enthusiasm to get over a point gets the better of the melodrama and the play becomes a preaching pamphlet, and occasionally the melodrama strains the leashes of credibility, but so well is the play acted under the direction of Elia Kazan that it is for the most part theatrically effective and compelling.

So timely is the problem and so sympathetic is the audience to it that *Deep Are The Roots* is assured of a profitable run in New York. That it will never tour the South is a foregone conclusion and unless an independent film producer takes up its cause, it is doubtful whether it will reach the screen.

The gamble of putting on a musical is pretty great but producers continue to jump in. The nominal budget seems to be around \$1,000,000 and if the press reception is unfavourable it is virtually impossible to recover a penny of it. We hope that *Carib Song*, which George Stanton recently brought in starring dancer Katherine Dunham, will prove the exception, for contrary to the notices, we found it unusually exciting and superior to some of the current musical

(Continued on page 36)

“Sigh No More”

NOEL COWARD'S
NEW REVUE
AT THE
PICCADILLY



Above: Madge Elliott and Cyril Ritchard singing “Parting of the Ways,” one of their many delightful numbers in Mr. Coward’s new revue. Miss Elliott gives some clever character studies, particularly as The Countess in “Pageant” and as Miss Lawson in “Music Hath Charms,” while Mr. Ritchard is at the top of his form as an Indian Army Officer and as the exotic singer in “Nina.”

Left: Joyce Grenfell nearly steals the show as the gawky schoolgirl in one of the funniest items in the revue. *Below:* The charming scene which provides the opening and finale of the show, with Graham Payn as Harlequin and some of the Singing Sylphides.



PICTURES
BY
ELMAN
AND
GLOVER

Tomorrow's Theatre

. by ERIC JOHNS

A GOOD new play has never been such a gold mine as it is today. This unparalleled boom in playgoing looks like giving a wider public a keener taste for the theatre, and managers are anxious for the supply of new plays to meet the increasing demand. They are not to be envied in their search.

Alec Clunes and his group of professional play-readers at the Arts Theatre only discover one script in a thousand worthy of production. The reason is not far to seek. They are mainly written by people with no working knowledge of the theatre. Anybody sits down and thinks he can write a play, without any technical preparation for the job. It looks so easy. It is not a long work, and therefore not as physically exhausting as writing a novel. No elaborate descriptions are called for. It is just reproduction of conversation such as we hear every day. Nevertheless, it takes a master

in the theatre, is of the opinion that the solution lies in the education of the younger generation. The children of today are the playwrights and actors of tomorrow, and if we want them to make any headway it is up to us to include the theatre as part of their educational scheme. They must be given a chance to know it.

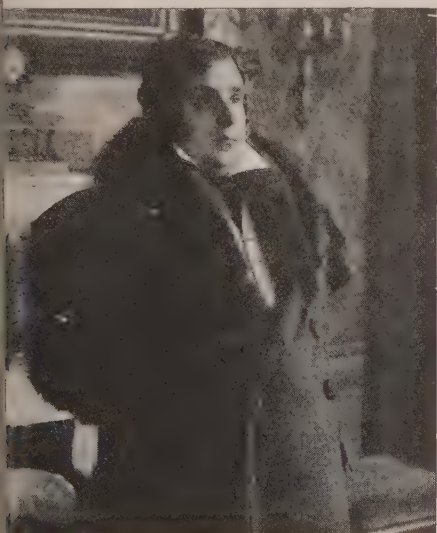
Apart from a spasmodic visit to a pantomime, the average child hardly knows the theatre exists, so how, without any background, can he be expected to suddenly write a brilliant play as soon as he reaches years of discretion? The parents are not entirely to blame for this state of affairs. Months may pass in provincial towns with only cheap revues and vulgar bedroom farces visiting the local theatre—hardly suitable fare to inspire a child's interest in the right direction.

Just as the normal scholastic routine give children a taste for literature, music, and drawing, so Robert Morley wants it to include theatre. Youngsters who have acquired more than a smattering of Keats, Tchaikovsky, and Rembrandt in the classroom, know next to nothing about the theatre, and Mr. Morley looks to the state to step in and repair the omission.

He has enormous admiration for the wartime work of the Arts Council which took drama, music, and painting to almost inaccessible places during the darkest years of our history. Now that we have peace again, Mr. Morley feels that one of the major duties of the Arts Council, as far as the theatre is concerned, should be the institution of an educational scheme, enabling the rising generation to reach manhood and womanhood with a rich personal experience of the living drama.

Robert Morley's recreation is conversation. If you slip into his dressing room at the Savoy between performances of *The First Gentleman* on a matinee day, you will find him discoursing with such knowledgeable men of the theatre as Ronald Gow, who adapted *Love On The Dole*; Sewell Stokes, who wrote that magnificent play, *Oscar Wilde*, which set Robert Morley on the road to fame; Peter Bull, who established the Perranporth theatre; and Noel Langley, just back from Hollywood; where he wrote *Maytime*, the popular Jeanette Macdonald film. All these young men are familiar with the "Morley Educational Scheme." In fact, it is one of the few Morley theories upon which they all agree, in broad principles, at any rate.

First and foremost, Mr. Morley thinks the Arts Council should be vested with



ROBERT MORLEY

as the Prince Regent in *The First Gentleman* at the Savoy Theatre.

to create a masterpiece in the theatre, is elsewhere. These amateur playwrights respect lawyers and doctors as professional men; they would not dream of trying their hand at defending a murderer or removing an appendix, so why should they think they can write a play without any inside knowledge of the theatre?

Robert Morley, who is more disturbed about this state of affairs than most men

(Continued on page 30)

Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON.



HENRY WENDON

WHEN Henry Wendon next sings the Duke in *Rigoletto* he will stop the show as never before. His 'La donna e mobile' will be found to have an ease and swagger unfamiliar in the past. Since he last sang in opera he has devoted more than a year to operetta, as the Duke of Urbino in *A Night In Venice* at the Cambridge. His shameless ditty, 'Constant I'll never be,' which opens the second act, vividly recalls the libertine Duke in *Rigoletto*, and is a mere foretaste of the joy in store for opera-goers. His insolent manner, as he lolls in a gilded chair to put over the song, gives the situation enormous significance and illustrates the development of this singer's stage technique since the days when his appearances were confined exclusively to the opera house.

We laymen are apt to be a little hard on opera stars when adversely criticising their wooden acting. As I talked with Henry Wendon I began to realise how much they had to contend with. Opera is the most complex of arts, and the singer is not allowed as much individual freedom as the actor enjoys in the theatre. The singer's first consideration is projecting his voice over the orchestra, so that it is heard to perfection by the audience. All subtleties of acting must be sacrificed to this salient point.

If he moves about the stage as freely as a straight actor, turning his face to the wings, or his back to the audience, he will be drowned by the orchestra, and the public will come to the conclusion that he has no voice to speak of. The voice must always be kept towards the audience, and that vital fact imposes considerable limitations upon the histrionic scope of the opera star, who

may well appear wooden to one unacquainted with the problems peculiar to his job.

The actor has to please the producer, but the opera singer has to please both producer and conductor. On that account, as Mr. Wendon so rightly remarks, he is often more sinned against than sinning. The producer wants a visual picture; the conductor wants a sound pattern; and in order to attain their respective ends they may hold diametrically opposed theories. The singer may be rehearsed by the producer and allotted certain stage-business, but when the conductor comes on the scene he may disagree entirely.

The conductor complains, "The music won't allow it!" The producer maintains, "The stage situation demands it!" And, more often than not, the conductor gets the last word. The unfortunate singer reaches the first performance in a maze, and usually scraps all his preconceived theories, as he stares straight at the conductor and sings full out into the auditorium.

In a play the actor works with the same leading lady every night and once they settle down to a steady run it is possible to develop characterisation and attain a degree of team-work unknown on the opera stage, where the tenor may be faced with a new soprano each time he sings Faust or Pinkerton. Often rehearsals are out of the question and he meets his prima donna for the first time when he walks on to the stage, and for safety's sake he resigns himself to singing the opera with those conventional gestures, known as "acting" in opera.

More opera singers are being lured into operetta these days, with such successes as *A Night In Venice*, *Gay Rosalinda*, *Perchance To Dream* running in the West-End. The Strauss music is delightfully rhythmic, making it easier to co-ordinate natural gestures with such music than in the case of static operas like *Aida* or *Lohengrin*, where the tenor can do little more than stand still and look well.

Henry Wendon is living proof that these incursions into operetta are going to benefit the opera stage. He has 'loosened-up' his gestures, acquired a 'natural' stage presence, and an ease of movement which are going to be an enormous asset when he returns to grand opera in roles offering a certain amount of histrionic scope to the singer. Mimi's death will certainly be more poignant the next time she dies in Henry Wendon's arms, for he will return to the opera house with a knowledge of the theatre that will breathe new life into old conventional operatic roles that we never previously regarded as creatures of flesh and blood.



Bigger (Frank Leighton) gives Lachie (Emrys Jones) a birthday present, but the dour-faced young Scotsman is not easily won over to friendship.

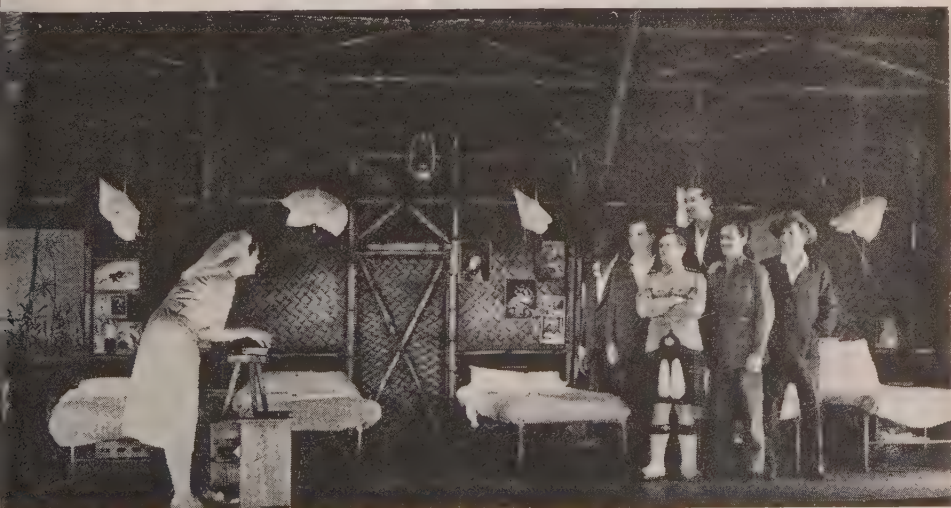


Sister Margaret (Margaretta Scott) examines Lachie for symptoms of the disease from which he is doomed to die in a few weeks.

“The Hasty Heart”

AT THE ALDWYCH

Scenes from *The Hasty Heart* by John Patrick, Firth Shephard's latest production at the Aldwych Theatre and one of the biggest successes in the West End.



The scene towards the close of the play when Lachie reconciled to his friends at last, agrees to have his picture taken in the Scots outfit given him as a birthday gift. Included in the group are *L. to R.*: Orlando Martins as Blossom, Nicholas Parsons as Kiwi, Jerry Verno as Tommy, and John McLaren as Yank.

Tomorrows's Theatre

(Continued from page 27)

power to requisition theatres for at least five weeks a year, freeing the stage for the presentation of plays suitable for children. In wartime the Government turned people out of their houses in order to billet troops, so surely a theatre manager could be compelled to present good quality plays for five weeks a year in order to sow seeds for future actors, dramatists, and playgoers. A scheme for making the theatre educational is only feasible if the state becomes a partner and steps in to direct commercial managers in the presentation of suitable fare, whether they like it or not.

For children between the ages of ten and fifteen, Mr. Morley suggests *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan*, *Alice In Wonderland*, and any play of adventure, as long as it does not descend to the level of the penny-dreadful. For children over the age of fifteen nothing could be better than Shakespeare and Shaw. Any Shakespearean play would be suitable; and with the possible exception of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, any Shaw play should meet with good response. *Saint Joan* and *Arms And The Man* should evoke the greatest enthusiasm, and provide ample food for discussion afterwards. Leading playwrights should be commissioned by the Arts Council to write new plays specially for children, which would, incidentally,

be another means of preventing wholesale unemployment when the present boom subsides, as it inevitably will, in due course.

These plays are to be presented by first class actors in real theatres. The fit-up company and the village hall are too slipshod to capture the imagination. Children must experience the thrill of a real theatre, with footlights flowing against the curtain. They must have the opportunity of seeing the works of the greatest dramatists, interpreted by the finest actors, assisted by the latest technical developments in scenery, lighting, and sound effects. Only the best is good enough, if the child's mind is to be impressed in the right way.

Children can become acquainted with good music by means of the radio, but the spell of the theatre can only be experienced inside a playhouse. There is no substitute, not even the cinema. Flesh and blood actors with painted faces and "un-mechanised" voices are essential to give children their first taste of theatre-magic.

There is no ulterior motive about putting music and dancing in the school syllabus. It is not a fifth-column method of converting pupils into opera singers and ballet dancers. The same would be true of the theatre; it would be introduced merely to acquaint youngsters with one of the greatest of the arts. Mr. Morley disapproves of using the stage for politics or propaganda. There are other channels by which such information can be conveyed to the public. His object is merely to put the theatre in the way of the young people to make them aware of its existence as an ideal way of enjoying leisure. He is not setting out to broaden their minds, but merely giving them a chance to fall in love with the theatre.

The modern theatre is in the hands of a clique who design it to appeal to the monied upper classes. Mr. Morley likens it to Benedictine and caviare. It is only for the few. We have a 13/6 theatre, when what is wanted is a 1/1d. one, within reach of all.

The "Morley Plan" would ensure the right contact with the theatre during the most impressionable years. After such training the prospective dramatist would start his career with an advantage unknown to the average youth of today, whose ignorance of the theatre is abysmal, through no fault of his own. Maybe if Mr. Morley asked a few chosen representatives of the Arts Council to tea in his dressing room the whole future history of the theatre would be changed.

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Left: WILFRED PICKLES, the well-known Berkshire B.B.C. announcer and versatile variety artist, as Sergeant Hardacre in the delightful comedy at the Westminster, which continues to attract very large audiences. Mr. Pickles took over the part from Robert Donat owing to the latter's illness. Right: RENE RAY, another newcomer to the cast, who is now playing the part of Millicent Southern.

"The Cure for Love"

THE SUCCESSFUL COMEDY
BY WALTER GREENWOOD
(Author of *Love on the Dole*)

at the WESTMINSTER



"Big Boy"

AT
THE
SAVILLE

Sacked as general manager from the Bolsover Store, Sir Frederick returns in the guise of shop-walker where he adds to Pastry's impression on a bewildered customer.

L. to R.: Richard Hearne as Mr. Pastry, Fred Emney as Sir Frederick Bolsover, and Ethel Edwards as the customer, in one of the many amusing scenes from the successful musical at the Saville.

The Buskers Come Back

By JOHN McMILLAN

BEFORE the war, the West End busking business—so said the “old hands”—was overcrowded. Too many youngsters were having a go at it. Then, while the blitz days were with us, the buskers dwindled; some went into street marketing, some joined the forces, some just disappeared.

But the victory celebrations showed they're still about, and now, slowly, they are coming back to the old sites in theatre-land. Some find cinema queues more profitable at present, others work the side streets. Early theatre hours mean more bookings and smaller, short-duration queues; it will take time and late-night performances to restore in full the brisk busking of the old days, when we had anything from the solo worker to the combine operating under the control of an office boss, or a team of six who, as a change from working the West End, would tour provinces and coast resorts by car in the season, sometimes netting £200 in a couple of weeks or less.

Busking on the Boats

Other spheres of operation were the summertime Isle of Wight boats, which, with drinks and a good time as well as good takings, made it a profitable busman's holiday, and in winter trains serving big Soccer matches—with an alert eye for officials who might object.

The buskers proper are a little community on their own. They indignantly refute any charge of begging; they are workers, paving-stone performers, specialists in a line which, pre-war, brought many of them a good living.

Technique of Collecting

Their secret of success, apart from a reasonable “turn,” is the technique of collecting. A good queue, worked by about ten independent buskers, will bring each around £1. A can brings in more than a hat; good humour and personal appeal help to fill it, sometimes aided by a sympathy line. But, in dress, not all buskers aim at sympathy. Many keep their pride and their neatness

of dress with it. They regard themselves as several steps higher in the social scale than the “price with a cup of tea” man with a public-school accent, who, at sixpence a touch, sometimes made £15 a week.

To get the queue silver-minded, the busker-collector will pop a florin in himself, then humorously ask if someone has made a mistake. It works.

Busker Slang

In busker slang, the business of collecting is “bottling the gillpots,” the “bottler” being the collector, “gillpots” the people or the public. Many tongues have gone into making up the buskers' language, predominantly Italian and Romany. Old stagers say Sir John Martin-Harvey was an adept in using it. To speak it is to “vote parlare;” if you don't, “nante parlare.”

“Yerjags” or “yergills,” is the equivalent of “chum” or “mate.” “After jogling, the bottler was sherricked from a bevvy before the gillpots could pester a madsa funt” just means that after performing in a public-house, the collector was ejected before he could gather ten shillings.

A queue is a “slang;” a “homey” is an individual; to “bump” is to bilk anyone, particularly a landlady; if something is bad it is “bald;” if good, it's “bon” or “bona.” A little later, it will be interesting to see whether the internationalism of war-time has had any effect on the buskers' argot.

Popular impression is that buskers are stage folk who have fallen on bad times. Some are, of course. But most of them are life-long buskers, professionals in their own line, and, in their own way, mighty proud of it.

FOR SALE. “Theatre World,” Nov., 1926, to Dec., 1931 (Aug., 1928, missing), Jan., 1932, to Dec., 1936, complete, Jan., 1937, to Sept., 1945 (Oct., 1941, Sept. and Dec., 1944, April, 1945, missing), all in excellent condition. Best offers to Swannell, 105, Gipsy Lane, Norwich.

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THE SPRING TERM COMMENCES JAN. 14th, 1946
Prospectus and all further information post free from
RAYMOND RAYNER, Secretary.

Leichner Lunch

THE first post-war Leichner Luncheon was held at the Savoy on October 14th, provided the most remarkable gathering of famous actors and actresses that London has seen in many a day.

This most happy occasion gave members of the profession an opportunity of paying tribute to these world-famous manufacturers of stage make-up, who have not only supplied but also brought out the war in spite of countless difficulties.

Grateful tributes were paid by Anna Wynyard and Peggy Ashcroft and other speakers were Lord Kavanagh, P. L. Wynn, J. Wheatcroft and S. Pollitzer, as well as the Chairman, Lord Esher.

In the top picture, S. Pollitzer, of Leichner, is seen giving the lunch, with Edith Evans and Anna Wynyard, and, at the bottom, a happy gathering of the Hermiones—Badrington and Gingold.



DECCA RECORD OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

The 16th annual general meeting of the Decca Record Company, Limited, was held recently in London.

Sir Cyril F. Entwistle, K.C., M.C. (the Chairman), said that the profit for the year was £103,194. The directors recommended a final dividend of 79 1-6 per cent. less tax on the Ordinary shares, making a total dividend for the year of 112 1-2% less tax.

Their outstanding achievement from the war years had been the Decca Radio Navigator. They believed it to be the world's most accurate and reliable navigational system, remarkable for its extreme ease of operation.

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The report was adopted.

BOOK REVIEW

MANY will welcome an opportunity to glean, in a compact volume, facts about the English theatre, past and present. Few have the inclination, and fewer, still, the time needed to explore the various diverse sources enshrining the story of English drama. In *The Romance of the English Theatre*, by Donald Brook (Rockcliff, 15/- net), this task has been done for them. There is an interesting sketch of the origins of theatrecraft in this country, a competent survey of important epochs in the development of the English stage—particularly in Shakespeare's time and in the later Restoration period. There is also a cluster of biographical portraits of players and playwrights, while the high standard of illustrations—not to mention their number—add further to the attraction of this excellent book.

The writer seems on less sure ground when giving views and criticism on the contemporary stage. Here he seems less than just, bearing in mind the prevailing high tone of London's theatres during the war years, and the crowded houses which have maintained various plays of the best standard for a long run. In any subsequent edition the author might well ponder a revision of some of his hasty judgments, which seem a flaw in an otherwise noteworthy production.

L.J.

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Amateur Stage

THE place—Toynbee Hall Theatre, in London's near East End. The time and occasion—this autumn, on a Saturday afternoon, during the current dramatic festival. The star performer—Mr. J. L. Hodgkinson, adjudicator in the festival.

Before Mr. Hodgkinson's competent scrutiny some twenty-four amateur groups have appeared, from whom four finalists will appear, on December 8th, to repeat their performances for the criticism of Mr. John Fernald.

That so many London groups are prepared for the exertion and trouble of staging these varied plays, and then are prepared to muster in front of the audience to receive Mr. Hodgkinson's benison or disapproval, is a considerable tribute to their enthusiasm and virility. It seems they need both qualities, for this adjudicator spares no feelings and a fault is promptly and clearly fastened upon its culprit.

Let it be said quite frankly that Mr. Hodgkinson's technical criticisms of such mixed amateur work are very sound and reliable. Whether it is flagrant miscasting, faulty speech or movement, bad grouping or lack of pace, he taps it on the head. Whether, in so doing, his little knocks depress or discourage the players, only they can really say. But the audiences certainly enjoyed Mr. Hodgkinson, for many laughs which were missed from some of the players came in the intervals from the adjudicator.

Altogether, if these amateur groups can stand up to this sort of thing, it is a very good sign. Apparently they can, for these Toynbee Festivals are now regular events.

* * *

On December 3rd, for six days, Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club are presenting Ibsen's *Brand*, a choice well away from the usual.

Streatham Dramatic Club, under the direction of Peter Boyd-Cox, are touring South London and district with *Claudia*. Two casts play at alternate performances. There are some vacancies for new members, who should apply to the secretary, Miss Stella Ralph, Peel House, Regency Street, Westminster.

The December (6th-10th) production of the Northern Repertory Company, at the

(Continued on facing page)

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Polytechnic Theatre, Holloway Road, will be *Bats in the Belfry*. This season has seen the company well installed in their own theatre, after a five years' closure.

The Vagabonds Dramatic Society, of Pinner, Middlesex, will present *The Two Mrs. Carrrolls*, on December 7th and 8th, and 14th and 15th.

Indicative of the swelling volume of interest in the drama among the young people of Britain may be quoted a very interesting Drama Conference held at Cripplegate Theatre, on November 24th, by the London Union of Girls' Clubs. Its motif was to discuss stage work from the aspect of the problems which face youth clubs in producing good plays. So, in a session lasting from 2.45 p.m. to 10 p.m., a very numerous and interestingly mixed audience had the benefit of talks and demonstrations by Mr. A. Emmett on stage lighting; Miss Lane Gayford on make-up; Mr. Roger Furse on stage costume and scenery; Mr. A. Van Gyseghem on production rehearsal; Mr. Eric Newton on spontaneous acting. Possibly Mr. A. Van Gyseghem's practical guidance on producing, in which blackboard design was followed by an actual rehearsal of a short scene from *The Rising Sun*, using members of the audience for the cast, carried most weight. But the use of question and answer, the emphasis on self-help, the references to good books, these facets were very valuable. This conference is part of a twelve-month drive by the London Union of Girls' Clubs to foster interest in the theatre amongst young girls of the metropolis.

Gateway

It is not surprising that Frank Vosper's play, *People Like Us* was banned for public performance. It is strongly reminiscent of an actual crime which came before the Court some years ago; there are certain passages between husband and wife curious and intimate; and the prison epilogue touches the border of horror. Outstanding among a competent cast was Mary Williams, who gave a fascinating study of a young woman who lives in her imagination and allows her conduct to trail in the wake of her fancy until consequences overtake her and find her unwilling to pay the price. Unwilling? Her terrified shriek of protest lifted the audience from their seats. Yet by clever writing and sensitive acting the play, which is not mere melodrama, ended on a note of sombre poetry. This actress could play Beatrice Cecci. Anthony Pendrell compelled admiration for an ideal presentation of the sailor lover and Cameron Miller made the husband, an unusual psychological study, acceptable as a living person. The smaller parts all presented recognisable facets of real people.

H.G.M.

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Echoes from Broadway

(Continued from page 25)

hits. The book by William Archibald takes you to the West Indies and tells of a native farmer's wife (Miss Dunham) who falls in love with a fisherman (Avon Long). She gets caught (both ways) and is killed by her jealous, overwrought husband (William Franklin). Granted the book is unimaginatively directed, there is still more than enough excitement and originality in Miss Dunham's choreography, Baldwin Bergersen's music, Jo Mielziner's settings and the Motley's costumes to arouse your enthusiasm and send you to the street applauding. The singing and dancing of the all Negro cast, which is magnificent, has been highlighted by the brilliant arrangements of Ted Royal, and Pembroke Davenport conducting the orchestra gets every musical effect and mood out of his men. London, we believe, would accord Miss Dunham and her remarkable dancing troupe a terrific reception.

After many years in Hollywood where he has become known as one of the most distinguished picture directors, Edmund Goulding returned to Broadway as author and director of *The Ryan Girl*, which the Messrs. Shubert have presented in association with Albert De Courville and which features June Havoc, Edmund Lowe, Doris Dalton and Una O'Connor. Unfortunately, Mr. Goulding's mind is still working in the movie cliché vein for *The Ryan Girl* is far from being acceptable theatre entertainment. It is a hoke melodrama on the old mother love theme of sacrifice and murder not disguised sufficiently to cover up its weary joints. Who knows, maybe someday you will see Bette Davis or Joan Crawford suffering their way through this one on the screen.

Talking of melodramas, one of the best we have ever seen, is hot and timely, based on fact—the Federal Bureau of Investigation's successful battle to prevent the secret of the atomic bomb from leaking to Germany—which Twentieth Century-Fox has dynamically captured for the screen in *The House On 92nd Street*. All shots were taken where they actually occurred where possible giving it an almost frightening authenticity—particularly for us, for we used to visit quite frequently a New York book shop, which we now find was one of the fronts for the nazi agents. The highest compliment can be paid to the actors: Leo G. Carroll, William Eythe, Signe Hasso, Lydia St. Clair and Gene Lockhart. They are just as natural as the many civilian non-actors used in the picture. The so called important movies we have caught recently have proved so stereotyped and disappointing that we could not resist this opportunity to pass along a plug for *The House On 92nd Street*.

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